

**Testimony**  
**Housing Committee Public Hearing**  
**February 28, 2023**  
**In support of SB 4**  
**Joelle Fishman, New Haven CT**

My name is Joelle Fishman. I live in New Haven and am active in a number of community organizations participating in today's hearing in support of SB 4.

Thank you for holding this hearing on the housing crisis in our state. The ability to have a stable place to call home is shrinking away for thousands of hard working people including families with children whose education is being disrupted as a result..

You will hear many stories today of how this crisis is affecting the people of our state including working class homeowners and renters, and disproportionately people of color and single moms. I would like to add my voice and share one story with you.

It is the story of a home health care provider who puts in many hours each week caring for others. She has been renting her apartment for 12 years. Three years ago an investment firm from out of state bought the property. The rent immediately went up 10% and has gone up 10% every year since.. Utilities are not included.

This health care provider is in danger of losing her apartment. The corporate entity that bought the property included an extra required fee for apartment renters insurance. She already had insurance and after trying repeatedly to reach the company without success, deducted that amount from her rent check each month. The corporate owner responded by filing for eviction, claiming that she owed \$1200.

She quickly discovered that she could not find another apartment nearby. To avoid eviction she agreed to pay off the \$1200 being demanded, a little at a time each month. As her rent continues to go up 10% every year, utility bills continue to escalate and it becomes harder and harder to make ends meet.

Fortunately this health care provider has not ended up having to live in her car, as has happened with some others. But hers is a very typical story. Hopefully we can agree that it is entirely unacceptable. Corporate landlords are terrorizing the people of our state to make their profits soar.

The Housing Committee and the state legislature cannot turn a blind eye to the housing crisis. Bold action on behalf of renters is urgently needed. A 2.5% rent cap along with putting the brakes on the ability of mega landlords to evict without just cause and to increase the rents in between tenants would go a long way toward creating some stability.

Ultimately, bigger solutions will be needed to guarantee decent, affordable housing as a human right.

It is incumbent on the Legislature to strengthen and pass SB 4 this session and stand on the side of renters and working class homeowners..